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Fire-and-rehire: Government blocks law to curb the practice

disputes.

any further.



But No 10 said it wanted new guidance for companies, rather than a law. A spokesman for Prime Minister Boris Johnson said: "Using threats of firing

and rehiring is completely unacceptable as a negotiating tactic. We expect companies to treat their employees fairly. "However, there is insufficient evidence to show legislation will stop the

Labour's Barry Gardiner said the government was "cowardly" for using

Parliamentary tactics to stop his bill in its tracks.

practice or will be effective." • Why do companies fire and rehire their workers?

Instead, the government says it will ask the arbitration service Acas to "produce more comprehensive clearer guidance to help all employers explore

all the options before considering fire and rehire".

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way to reflect the concerns for the long-term issue about workers' rights", adding: "We will legislate if we need to, but we'll do it as a last resort, not as a first resort."

something that absolutely everyone agrees on and yet all the way from [former union leader] Len McCluskey to the prime minister himself, everyone agrees fire and rehire is wrong - so why is the government determined to block this Bill?

Speaking in the Commons, the Labour MP said: "In politics, it's rare to find

"The tactic of filibustering to talk the bill out is cowardly. It seems the

government do not wish to be seen actually to vote against the bill itself.

Mr Gardiner's bill now falls to the bottom of the list and is unlikely to progress

"They would rather pretend under the cloak of a closure motion that they want to go on talking about it so it simply runs out of time." Fire-and-rehire has existed for decades, but the practice has come under more scrutiny recently as more firms hit by the pandemic have used it to reduce their staffing costs.

Mr Gardiner's private member's bill said employees should be fully consulted

If the employees agreed to it, they could be taken on under new terms, under

But if a dispute occurred between staff and a company, an independent

committee would decide on whether the fire-and-rehire could go ahead, the bill said.

'Anti-bad business leaders'

on any fire-and-rehire plans.

if supported by the government.

Party today have been a disgrace.

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the proposed new law.

One Tory MP, Christian Wakeford, supported it in the Commons, telling the House: "This policy isn't anti-business, it is anti-bad business leaders."

But others on the government benches criticised the bill, with Kevin

Hollinrake warning: "The road to hell is paved with good intentions."

Mr Gardiner told the BBC his plan was a "practical" way to deal with the "worst

excesses" of fire-and-rehire - and said the proposals could become law quickly

insolvency. The government move has led to criticism outside the chamber, with the TUC's general secretary Frances O'Grady saying: "The government has chosen to

side with bad bosses by failing to take action to tackle fire and rehire today."

"They have colluded to stand on the side of bullying bosses and against the

interests of workers, showing their real colours, so the hypocrisy of the Tory

party was on full display for all to see. They say one thing but do another."

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham added: "The antics of the Conservative

Tory MP Laura Farris said the rules on fire and rehire needed to be tightened

up, but it had to be available as "an option of last resort" for companies facing

The Department for Business, Enterprise and Industrial Strategy has been asked for a comment.

Barry Gardiner Keir Starmer

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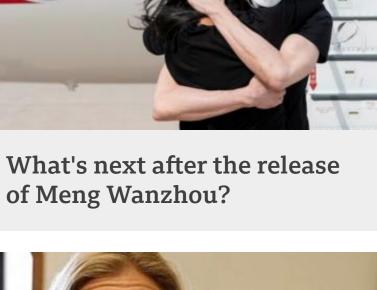
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